

# EXAM ANALYSIS

A thoughtful analysis of your marked exam will help you to learn from your experience. If your exam is available for analysis, this outline will guide you toward understanding, and hence improving, your approach to examinations.

**Remember:** Your experience may show that some other strategies are effective for you. No approach is best for all people all of the time, and you will want to learn from your own observations.

Problem Area	Strategies
<b>Exam Strategies</b>	
<b>Changed Answer</b>	
Q. Do you make last minute desperation changes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not change an answer unless you know <b>WHY</b> the first choice was wrong and/or <b>WHY</b> the second choice is right.</li> <li>Do not change an answer just because of uncertainty or lack of confidence in your knowledge.</li> </ul>
<b>Hurried too much/careless</b>	
Q. Are you letting your fear of not finishing on time override a systematic approach?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slow down. Use positive self-talk. Say to yourself "I am a careful test taker. I check each answer with the question to make sure that I have not marked the wrong letter by mistake. I check to see if I have marked <b>ALL POSSIBLE</b> multiple-choice answers. I check to make sure that I have not skipped any questions".</li> <li>Plan to leave 5-10 minutes at the end of the test to check for careless mistakes.</li> </ul>
<b>Ran Out of Time</b>	
Q. Do you make a plan for how you will budget your time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look over the whole exam first and decide how much time you can give to each part of the exam.</li> <li>Give more time to questions worth more points; write your estimated times in the margins throughout the exam.</li> <li>Plan 10 minutes for checking over your answers at the end.</li> <li>Make a key word marginal outline before writing an essay answer.</li> <li>Answer easiest questions first to build confidence and get most credit for what you know.</li> <li>Don't spend too much time on any one question.</li> <li>Put a ? mark before questions you don't know and return to them later.</li> </ul>
<b>Didn't Do What Question Asked</b>	
Q. Do you know WHAT you are TO DO?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slow down; read the question carefully.</li> <li>Number the things that you have been directed to do (ie. 1. <b>List</b> the nerves... and 2. <b>Give</b> their enervations).</li> </ul>

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<b>Didn't Note Key Words</b>  Q. Did you underline pertinent information?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It may help you to focus on pertinent information if you read the question quietly aloud, emphasising such words as names, dates, body parts, locations, etc.</li> <li>• <b>Underline</b> the key words in the question.</li> </ul>
<b>Misread/Misinterpreted Question</b>  Q. Do you understand the question?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slow down.</li> <li>• Read the question twice.</li> </ul>
<b>Didn't Use Precise Wording</b>  Q. Is your answer fully and exactly explained?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be as specific as possible.</li> <li>• Use the correct terminology.</li> <li>• Explain an answer fully but briefly.</li> </ul>
<b>Blanked Out/Test Anxiety</b>  Q. Is nervousness interfering with your ability to take the test even though you are prepared?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make an appointment with University Counselling Service to learn strategies for easing test anxiety.</li> </ul>
<b>Didn't Ask for Help</b>  Q. Were you embarrassed to ask the instructor for clarification?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When permitted, <b>ask</b> for help if you need it.</li> <li>• Approach the instructor in this matter: "I am not sure how to interpret this question. I believe that it means to... Am I on the right track?" The instructor can tell you <b>YES</b> or <b>NO least</b> and usually will go into more detail.</li> </ul>
<b>Couldn't Remember/Mental Block</b>  Q. Did you forget information that you know you studied?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put a ? mark next to the question and move onto the next question.</li> <li>• Think of other information related to that item (other plays by the same author, other muscles in the group) which might trigger the desired answer.</li> <li>• Don't waste time trying to will an answer if it doesn't come quickly; often the subconscious will produce it if you <b>STOP</b> trying to think of it.</li> <li>• Some other question or information further along in the test may generate a clue.</li> <li>• Don't berate yourself for forgetting ("I am so dumb!") but promise yourself to come back to it later <b>AND MOVE ON</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Content Knowledge</b>	
<b>Answered the Wrong Thing</b>  Q. Did you read the question carefully?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slow down; read the question twice; underline key words.</li> <li>• Question and answer yourself: "What am I to do? I am to explain (list, discuss, draw) why such and such does..."</li> </ul>

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<b>Didn't Think Answer Through</b>  Q. Are you hurrying too much?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slow down; identify <b>WHAT</b> you are being asked and then <b>THINK</b> of your own answer before looking at the options provided on multiple-choice questions.</li> <li>• For short answer questions, think through all the parts of the answer before you write it.</li> <li>• Before you move on to the next question, re-read your answer and ask yourself, "Did I leave anything out?"</li> </ul>
<b>Couldn't Visualise Answer</b>  Q. Did I take time to try to SEE the information?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shut your eyes and try to <b>SEE</b> the information.</li> <li>• Touch or located the corresponding body part on yourself.</li> <li>• Practice drawing diagrams, etc. when preparing for the test - try to <b>SEE</b> your drawing in your mind.</li> </ul>
<b>Didn't Know Steps/Processes</b>  Q. Did you identify these steps when you studied?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make numbered lists, flow charts, cycle charts of the steps or processes.</li> <li>• Study the charts and then try to reconstruct them from memory.</li> <li>• Know <b>HOW MANY</b> steps are involved; the brain will keep searching until it has found all of them.</li> </ul>
<b>Couldn't Draw/Label Parts</b>  Q. Did you practice drawing and labelling parts during study?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draw and label diagrams <b>yourself</b>; don't just passively look at the ones in the book.</li> <li>• Have someone ask you to locate parts or make a list of random parts and see if you can find them.</li> </ul>
<b>Didn't Know Facts</b>  Q. Did you master the material?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-test; quiz yourself out loud (rather than thinking an answer, <b>SAY</b> it <b>OUT LOUD</b> or <b>WRITE</b> it - you will find out quickly if you <b>KNOW</b> it); drill.</li> </ul>
<b>Got Answers Confused/Reversed</b>  Q. Did you use mnemonics to aid your memory?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Devise mnemonics (first initials of words on a list combined into sentences; stories containing key words, meaningful associations, colour coding, rhymes, etc). If you want to learn how to do this effectively, make an appointment with a counsellor or learning skills adviser.</li> </ul>
<b>Didn't Know Terms/Characteristics</b>  Q. Did you use flashcards or other mnemonic devises?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlight terms and characteristics in your notes and reading.</li> <li>• Make up flashcards and drill.</li> <li>• Self- test to see if you can define the terms <b>OUT LOUD</b> or in writing.</li> </ul>

Problem Area	Strategies
<b>Didn't Understand Concept</b>	
Q. Were you confused about the idea?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask academic staff for help</li> <li>• Study with someone else in the class or with a study group.</li> <li>• Make an appointment with a learning skills adviser.</li> <li>• Find another textbook which might explain the idea from a different angle.</li> <li>• Engage in a private tutor from the Employment and Careers Service.</li> </ul>
<b>Test Preparation</b>	
Q. Did you use good time management techniques?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quickly through all of the material to get a good estimate of how much time you will need to study and memorise.</li> <li>• Make out a weekly study grid or schedule to determine what time you have to study for the test.</li> <li>• Plan at least 3 study periods at spaced intervals.</li> <li>• Divide the material you have to study into small units and study intensely for short periods of time (30-40 minutes and then take a break).</li> <li>• Create study aids (flashcards, summary sheets, mnemonics, charts) to aid in memorising.</li> <li>• <i>Self-test</i> by writing or speaking answers aloud until you have over-learned the material.</li> <li>• Make an appointment with a counsellor to discuss time management strategies.</li> </ul>
<b>Didn't Finish the Reading</b>	
Q. Did you miss questions because you didn't finish the reading or didn't pickup the facts from the textbook?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule short periods to read - no more than 40 minutes at a time.</li> <li>• Make an appointment with the Counselling Service or the learning skills adviser to discuss your reading habits and to learn an efficient method for reading your textbooks.</li> </ul>
<b>Didn't Have Complete Notes</b>	
Q. Are you missing questions because you did not have the information in your notes the first place?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photocopy a classmate's notes to check to see if you are getting down the same material.</li> <li>• Use an efficient note-taking format; see a counsellor or the learning skills adviser to learn the various kinds of formats.</li> <li>• Use symbols and abbreviations whenever possible.</li> <li>• Review notes for 5 minutes after each class to fill in ideas and mark whatever is unclear.</li> <li>• Tape record lecture and fill in your notes at a second hearing (this can be useful but it is time consuming).</li> </ul>

Problem Area	Strategies
<p><b>Studied Wrong Material</b></p> <p>Q. Did you learn from the instructor what material the test would cover?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask questions about the test: What will be covered? What kind of test is it? How long will it be? How much time will you have? How will it be graded?</li> <li>• Note the topics which have been given the most weight in lectures.</li> <li>• Study anything the lecturer has said or hinted will be on the test.</li> <li>• Confer with a classmate as to what might be stressed.</li> <li>• Study and master anything that has caused you confusion.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Didn't Get Help</b></p> <p>Q. Did you seek help for the information you didn't understand?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start your review early enough so that there is time to get help if you find you need it.</li> <li>• Don't stand on pride; if you need help, get it.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Test Type</b></p>	
<p><b>Fill-in</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify <b>WHAT KIND</b> of an answer is needed: name, date, number?</li> <li>• Use a synonym if you cannot think of the <b>EXACT</b> word.</li> <li>• Use syntactic clues (a, an) to help identify the answer.</li> <li>• Re-read your completed sentence to be sure your answer makes sense.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Multiple Choice</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read the question carefully and <b>SLOWLY</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Underline key words</b> to focus your line of thought.</li> <li>• Try to answer the question from what you know before you look at the answers; jot down key ideas next to the question.</li> <li>• Read <b>JUST</b> the <b>FIRST</b> answer; visualise what is being asked; underline pertinent words.</li> <li>• Compare the <b>FIRST</b> answer to your answer.</li> <li>• Mark <b>T</b> or <b>F</b> next to the answer (or ?).</li> <li>• Move <b>JUST</b> to the <b>SECOND</b> answer and repeat the process; the process of eliminating one answer at a time (rather than looking them all over at once) tends to reduce stress and promotes clearer thinking.</li> <li>• Save time at the end of the test to be sure that you have not accidentally circled the wrong letter.</li> </ul>

Problem Area	Strategies
Short Answer/Essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number the things that you are to do: 1. <b>Discuss</b> how the ...</li> <li>2. Use <b>at least two</b> of the authors we have studies to support your points.</li> <li>Every word must count in sort answer tests. Use exact terms. Come right to the point; avoid generalities; however, give full information.</li> <li>Most points are lost on essay tests because answers are too general; support all main ideas with facts, facts, facts.</li> <li>Jot a word outline in the margin of the test to remind you of what you want to cover.</li> <li>Keep track of your time so that you do not have to hurry your essay.</li> <li>If you are short of time, jot down a few notes of what else you would have covered.</li> </ul>
True-False	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Underline key words which could be opposites of the answer or misinformation.</li> <li>Assume that an answer is true unless by what you have learned you know it is false.</li> <li>If <b>ANY PART OF THE ANSWER IF FALSE</b>, it is all false.</li> <li>Watch out for absolute qualifiers such as <b>must, always, never, etc</b>; if you can think of one exception, the answer is wrong.</li> <li>Be alert to double negatives or for answers that must be answered <b>F</b> in order to be true.</li> </ul>
Test Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If possible, always find out what the correct answer is.</li> <li>Determine <b>WHY</b> you missed the answer; analyse the types of mistakes you are making and to devise more effective study strategies.</li> </ul>

Adapted from: **Learning Skills Center, University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, Washington, USA**



University Counselling Service, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Campus Centre (Western Extension), Monash University, Clayton Campus.  
Telephone (+61 3) 9905 3156. [www.adm.monash.edu.au/commserv/](http://www.adm.monash.edu.au/commserv/)